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Natural Environments Leadership Team Meeting August 7, 2006

Participants: Kevin Bernadt, KCDDD Board
Jon Botten, Children's Therapy Center
Jane Campbell, King County DDD
Jane Dobrovolny, Northwest Center
Sandy Duncan, CHAP
Kim Gerdes, Kinderling Center
Betsy McAlister, King County Parent Coalition
Jana Pettit, Wonderland
Susan Sandall, UW-EEU
Magan Cromar, Encompass
Jan Wrathall, King County DDD

Minutes: Elaine Goddard, King County DDD

Facilitator: David Wertheimer, Kelly Point Partners

INTRODUCTIONS:

Everyone introduced themselves to Kim Gerdes who is a new member of the Natural Environments Leadership Team (NELT). She replaces Lisa Greenwald at Kinderling.

The group reviewed and approved previous minutes for June 1, 12, 29, and July 10.

PROVIDER MEETING UPDATE

The group discussed what happened at the provider meeting on July 21. Jan and Jane summarized what has been happening at the NELT meetings, handed out copies of the drafted documents and answered questions. They also passed out a draft of the change matrix and explained the provider's role in completing the matrix. Providers were asked to get questions about the matrix to the County by July 21, but none have been received. Questions may come up as providers begin completing the matrix. Completed plans are due by August 31 and this group agreed to look at a summary of highlights from the plans that will be prepared by the County (including issues raised that need discussion by the NELT) at the next Team meeting on September 8th. There was a discussion about whether provider agencies realized that completion of the change matrix was a requirement and that the County would be negotiating and approving each agency's plan. The County will e-mail providers to remind them of the due dates for the completed matrix and continue to discuss natural environments and the change matrix at future provider meetings.

LEADERSHIP TEAM CHARTER

The team was asked to continue on an ongoing basis to serve as a sounding board for policies and act as ambassadors/mentors to peers during the implementation of natural environments.

In addition, the group could act as a clearing house for other issues that emerge in relation to natural environments. The group agreed to continue, and asked for ongoing facilitation and an expansion of Team membership to bring in representatives from all the providers, parents or individuals that have received services in natural environments, and more cultural diversity. It was suggested that new PT, OT, and/or FRC members come from agencies currently not represented. Names of potential members should be submitted to the county for consideration by August 21. During the natural environments implementation phase, the team would meet bi-monthly (on the months between the provider meetings), then move to quarterly as things get under way. The County will draft a new charter for the expanded NELT describing the desired ongoing role for the Team. A meeting will be scheduled for October.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS POLICY, PROCEDURE AND GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

This document assimilates the work the team has done to date, and includes additional guidance material added by the County. The procedures and policy pieces are binding, whereas the guidance addresses providers', families' and the general public's need to better understand the County's expectations in relation to implementation of natural environments. The County would like to use this format for future topics that require guidance in Early Intervention. A comment was made that some of the guidance sounds more prescriptive than informational. It was suggested that the format more clearly identify what sections are required components and what are informational. The County will send out a revised version to the group by August 21 to review and finalize by next meeting. The County will also send finalized documents to the State for their review. The State has been receptive to what has been sent to them thus far and has provided helpful feedback.

The County provided members of the NELT with the work they did to date on their portions of the change matrix that relate to county activities. This is a living document and will continue to change as the process moves forward. The group reviewed Priority Area #1, and made some changes. The County will send out a revised matrix to all agencies to let them know what the County is doing.

The County is concerned that it has not received any feedback from agencies regarding completing their portion of the matrix. This matrix is an important tool for agencies. It will become their roadmap to implement natural environments. Because providing services in natural environments is a Part C mandate, agencies that do not implement natural environments in compliance with the State Application could eventually lose their County contract. The County needs to see the plans to determine where the system is and to plan for future needs. NELT members did report that a number of agencies have begun to engage in the work of completing the matrix. One agency has finished this work; others are at different points in the process.

NEXT MEETING: September 8, 2006, 9:30 to noon, at Region 4 offices.

Agenda Items:

- Review County report on matrix trends received from the providers.
- Finalize procedure & guidance draft, to be sent out 8/21.
- Discuss new NELT expansion members, to be nominated by 8/21.
- Finalize charter for next phase of NELT activities.
- Gather information on NE service delivery to diverse communities.